



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT BY

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ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)



General Debate

**SECOND COMMITTEE
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FINAL TEXT

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM congratulates you, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to steer the work of the Second Committee for this 74th Session of the General Assembly. We assure you of our full support and cooperation, as you undertake your responsibilities during this critical period in the work of the Committee.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Belize on behalf of AOSIS.

Mr. Chairman,

The Second Committee begins its work on the heels of a development-focused High-level week. During the week, our highest representatives highlighted the persistent challenges faced by developing countries, including the looming deadlines in relation to our internationally agreed commitments. They also noted, with alarm, the consequences that stem from the inadequate response of the international community to address the global emergency of climate change. Critical macro-economic imbalances and environmental concerns compound these myriad development challenges, which add to this worrisome outlook.

It is against this backdrop that the Caribbean Community underscores its issues of priority for the upcoming deliberations of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

The sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDs) remains under constant threat from combined and inter-related development challenges that are beyond our capacity and resources to adequately address. These include, but are not limited to, high debt burdens and restricted access to concessional forms of finance, which are aggravated by persistent social challenges and susceptibility to external environmental and economic shocks.

CARICOM is fully committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by the end of the next decade. As such, our Region is redoubling efforts to end poverty, eradicate hunger, ensure universal access to quality health care and education, and to build more equal, inclusive, and peaceful societies.

However, given our small size, limited economic resources, and vulnerability to natural disasters, we face special challenges in our quest to achieve these ambitious and transformative development goals. Of critical importance in surmounting these challenges is the ability of developing countries to secure the means of implementation to operationalize their national sustainable development plans. This will only be possible by forging partnerships within the international community, including engaging

with civil society, the private sector, regional organisations, and with sub-national governments and local administrative bodies.

CARICOM recognizes the complementarity between the SDGs and the priorities of the SAMOA Pathway. On this basis, we see the need for the United Nations system to systematically reinforce the SAMOA Pathway, to ensure that risks and challenges confronting SIDS are adequately addressed.

Mr. Chairman,

Several of these risks threaten our ability to participate in the global financial system. We are currently confronted by the AML/CFT de-risking policies pursued by international correspondent banks, primarily in North America and Europe; the blacklisting of some of our Member States by the European Union, which has designated them as so-called Non-cooperative Tax Jurisdictions; and we face the consequences of having graduated from access to multilateral concessional resources.

These challenges exacerbate already critical financing gaps that result from limited fiscal space, extremely high debt burdens, and reduced private financial inflows, particularly foreign direct investment. Unless these issues are addressed, we will continue to struggle to mobilize adequate resources for SDG implementation. In addition, we run the risk that hard-won development gains, which have been reflected by the achievement of economic and social progress in some areas overtime, could be eroded by a single natural disaster. Our level of socio-economic achievement is in fact

one side of a double-edged sword, for it places most CARICOM Member States in the middle -income classification. It is this classification that has resulted in our graduation from accessing certain concessional financing windows.

We have consistently made the point that the classification system utilised by the international financial institutions reflects an outdated, inadequate, one-dimensional approach that is overly reliant on per capita income as a measure of a country's development. We have called for a multidimensional approach to assessing poverty and overall developmental levels, which takes into account structural gaps and inequalities that exist within and between countries. Due consideration should, we believe, be given to the utilization of a vulnerability index, while taking into account national priorities and circumstances.

The cascading effect of graduation is that it forces countries like ours to borrow at commercial rates, which increases the cost of credit, exacerbates our high external debt burdens and negatively impacts our creditworthiness and ultimately reduces our fiscal and policy space. We reiterate, therefore, that while the middle income categorization is an indication that some commendable economic and social progress has been achieved, in reality our countries still require access to concessional multilateral funding and ODA to undertake vital public investments, such as resilience building, disaster reconstruction and implementation of the SDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

The catastrophic impacts of climate change have serious consequences on the lives of our citizens, disrupting our societies, economies and progress towards achieving sustainable development. This is yet another instance whereby circumstances not of our making, if not adequately addressed, threaten to destabilize us.

Caribbean Member States have recorded meaningful progress in implementing our Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. However, we are concerned with the failure of the international community to take the collective action required to meet this global challenge which, for us, is of an existential nature. The magnitude and urgency of the situation was starkly highlighted by the scientific community in the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on 1.5 Degrees Celsius.

The catastrophic events of September 2017 and 2019, which decimated the islands of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and The Bahamas, will forever be etched in our consciousness. There is no better example of the risk that climate change represents to sustainable development than the impact on SIDS of these catastrophic events.

That said, CARICOM Member States are not short on ambition, nor on the commitment required to operationalise the Paris Agreement. However, our ability to effectively implement our plans presents an enormous challenge. Limitations surrounding the adequate mobilization of climate finance and its

effective delivery at the ground level hinder our ability to take urgently needed climate action. The failure to adequately finance our climate adaption needs has dire consequences for our countries, given the overriding need to build climate resilience and implement strategies to recover from natural disasters. We recognize, however, that a reduction in the level of our disaster risk exposure is also dependent on our efforts to develop integrated disaster risk financing frameworks. We must therefore make better use of ex ante resilience building and state contingent debt instruments to better manage our public debt.

Mr. Chairman,

We recall the commitments of multilateral development banks to increase their climate finance and to align their operations with the Paris Agreement's long-term goals. However, even as we welcome the recent pledges made by a group of MDBs to support global climate action investments, by providing USD 175 billion in annual financing by 2025, the quantum of these investments remains well below what is required. CARICOM therefore continues to appeal for these institutions to expand the scale of their climate finance undertakings, including through direct and co-finance investments in projects located in developing countries.

In this respect, we look forward to the actualization of the announcements made, and initiatives launched during the Secretary-General's recent Climate Action Summit. We need to see concrete action, particularly as it relates to adaptation and resilience building. The time is now to capitalize on this momentum, as we approach COP 25 in December of this year.

Mr. Chairman,

We view development finance as the indispensable lynchpin for the successful achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. The mobilisation of blended finance, whereby concessional funds are strategically mixed with private investment capital, can enable the realization of key public investments with high development impact, which are critical to achieving the SDGs.

CARICOM looks forward to considering the macro-economic issues on the agenda of the Committee, particularly those that affect our ability to achieve more inclusive job creation and sustainable growth, such as *‘external debt sustainability and development’*, the *‘international financial system and development’*, *‘international trade and development’* and *‘financing for development’*.

We support an approach to development that meets the needs of vulnerable populations wherever they reside and are conscious of the need to address persistent levels of poverty and inequality. In addition, the vulnerability posed by unsustainably high debt burdens requires comprehensive consideration through the work of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

Suffice it to say that we have an extensive and challenging agenda before us, which we trust will be managed in a manner that acknowledges the

interlinkages amongst the issues, while taking into account their differentiated impacts on our economies and societies.

Throughout our deliberations and negotiations, we must remain mindful that we are not engaged in abstract discussions. Rather, we are creating the normative framework for effectively addressing matters at the centre of the lives and livelihoods of our People.

In conclusion, CARICOM assures you, Mr. Chairman, of our full support and that we look forward to working with you and all delegations to effectively accomplish the work of this Committee.

I thank you.